

11th March 1929]

The motion was carried.

Clauses 1 and 2 were put, passed and added to the Bill.

The preamble was then put, passed and added to the Bill.

* The hon. Khan Bahadur Sir MUHAMMAD USMAN SAHIB Bahadur:—
“Sir, I now move that the Bill be passed into law.”

The hon. Mr. T. E. MOIR:—“I second it.”

The motion was carried, and the Bill was passed into law.

IX

A BILL FURTHER TO AMEND THE MADRAS PORT TRUST ACT, 1905.

* The hon. Diwan Bahadur M. KRISHNAN NAYAR:—“Sir, I introduce a Bill a further to amend the Madras Port Trust Act, 1905.”

* The hon. Diwan Bahadur M. KRISHNAN NAYAR:—“Sir, I move that the Bill be taken into consideration at once.

“I may just say one word as to what the Bill is. The Port Trust Act enables the Port Trust to allot money for different purposes. But it does not contain any provision for allotting money for forming a reserve fund. Now, sometimes, unexpected expenditure occurs and unexpected diminution in income also happens. Sometimes there are damages due to unforeseen circumstances, such as fires, cyclones and so on. For these reasons, it is necessary that the Port Trust Act should have a provision enabling the Trust to allot money for forming a reserve fund. This is the main object of the Bill. Now that this Bill is being introduced, opportunity is taken for making some verbal and formal changes in the Act. Originally, when the Port Trust Act was passed, the Port Trust was authorized to issue only debentures for raising money. Subsequently, by an amendment introduced in 1923, the Port Trust was also authorized to issue bonds and stock certificates in addition to debentures. Provision is made in this Bill to insert in the relevant sections the expression ‘Port Trust security’ for ‘debenture’ wherever ‘debenture’ occurs. The Bill is thoroughly non-controversial.”

* The hon. Mr. M. R. SETURATNAM AYYAR:—“I second it.”

The motion was put and carried.

As there were no amendments, clauses 1 to 7 were put, passed and added to the Bill.

The preamble was put, passed and added to the Bill.

* The hon. Diwan Bahadur M. KRISHNAN NAYAR:—“I now move that the Bill be passed into law.”

The hon. Mr. M. R. SETURATNAM AYYAR:—“I second it.”

The motion was carried and the Bill was passed into law.

X

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE FOR 1926-27

* The hon. Mr. T. E. MOIR:—“Mr. President, I move that the report (b) of the Public Accounts Committee on the Audit and Appropriation Accounts of the Presidency of Madras for 1926-27 be taken into consideration.

“Sir, I make this with reference to rule 34 (2) of the Legislative Council Rules and at this stage I do not propose to say anything more than to

^a Published in the Fort St. George Gazette on 19th February 1929 as Bill No. 7 of 1929.

^b Printed separately.

[Mr. T. E. Moir]

[11th March 1929]

express my appreciation of the services of the members of the committee to whose labours we are indebted for the report which has already been placed on the table of the House."

* The hon. Khan Bahadur Sir MUHAMMAD USMAN SAHIB Bahadur:—"I second it."

Mr. D. NARAYANA RAJU :—"I move, Sir,—

'Add the following at the end :

"(a) That on such consideration this Council is of opinion that in regard to the following matters, namely,—

(1) Paragraph 27 of the Report.—Separate review of the results of the departmental manner of exploiting the timber resources of the Presidency,

(2) Paragraph 31 of the Report.—Classification of Indian Civil Service officers under judicial training as non-vacation officers, and

(3) Paragraph 48 of the Report.—Failure to treat the formation of the Mettur district as a new service, the views of the Accountant-General should be accepted.

"(b) And that in regard to paragraph 42 of the report this Council agrees with the recommendations of the Accountant-General that the Leather Trades Institute should be closed."

"In moving this amendment I would like to say only a few words.

4-15
p.m.

"With regard to the first portion of this amendment, I may say this. The Government have invested nearly a sum of 22 lakhs in this business and during the year 1926-27 the loss on this business was nearly Rs. 3,00,000. This loss is a recurring one. There is no prospect of earning any profits on this business. Therefore, on the consideration of the merits of this case, the Accountant-General has recommended that the Government should take a review of this departmental exploitation of the timber resources of this Presidency. By a majority the Public Accounts Committee has turned down the proposal of the Accountant-General. I propose that this Council should accept the proposal of the Accountant-General in this respect and urge on the Government that they should take a separate review of the departmental exploitation of forests of this Presidency. Of course, I am aware that the Government are examining the whole policy of the Forest department. But it may take a very very long time for the Government. Therefore this is a matter which requires urgent attention of the Government. Therefore this departmental exploitation of the forest may be reviewed separately to see that something is done to prevent the recurring loss of three lakhs every year to the Government.

"Now, with regard to the second part of the amendment, namely, 'the classification of Indian Civil Service officers under judicial training as non-vacation officers,' the Government of India have laid down certain principles on which this classification should be done. In this respect they make a distinction between an officer's duties which require his presence at his place of duty and those which do not require his presence at the place of his duty; and they say that a Government servant who has routine duties to discharge during vacation, which does not require his presence at his place of duty and which can be performed at any place may be considered to have availed

11th March 1929]

[Mr. D. Narayana Raju]

himself of the vacation. As regards the Civil Service officers in question, their duty is to study law books and it certainly comes under the term routine duty which can be performed even during the vacation at any place. It is not a duty which requires his presence at any particular place. To get over this difficulty the Government of Madras say that the whole of India is his place of duty. Government of Madras in their anxiety to grant a privilege to these officers also contend that the study of law books is not routine matter which can be performed even during the vacation. But this is all against common-sense. In those cases where these officers go away from the places to which they were attached to any other place during the vacation to study their law books at leisure, they must be considered to have availed themselves of the vacation and therefore all the disadvantages which attach to the officers availing vacations should be attached to their case also. The position taken up by the Madras Government and by the majority members of the Public Accounts Committee is not reasonable in this matter. The contention of the Accountant-General is much more reasonable. I hope this Council would accept the recommendation of the Accountant-General in this respect also.

"Now with regard to the third paragraph 'Failure to treat the formation of the Mettur district as a new service:' With regard to the Mettur Project certain expenditure was sanctioned by this House. On the strength of that the Government have constituted the Mettur Project area as a separate district altogether. Now the Accountant-General took objection to that procedure. He says this new subject of constituting the Mettur Project area into a separate district should go again to the Council for vote. But the Government's answer to that is that when the Council sanctioned expenditure on the Mettur Project they impliedly consented to constitute the Mettur Project area into a separate revenue district. That is to stretch the language and the implications of the vote of the House. The Council voted only the expenditure on the engineering works and other things connected with the project. They have never voted that the whole area can be constituted into a separate district with a separate Collector and other district officers. That is clearly a new service which was not contemplated when the Council voted for the expenditure on the project itself. Here also I hope the Council would accept the recommendations of the Accountant-General and not the views of the Government in this respect.

"The remaining part of my amendment is 'that in regard to paragraph 42 of the report this Council agrees with the recommendation of the Accountant-General that the Leather Trade Institute shall be closed.'

"With regard to the Leather Trade Institute the previous Public Accounts Committee recommended that this Trade Institute should be closed at once. The Government have not acceded to the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee. What they have done with regard to that is they have dispensed with the services of certain menials and clerks while retaining the services of the Leather Experts there. It is a funny way of accepting the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee. They wanted to dispense with the services of the experts who are very expensive to the Government and not to dispense with the services of a few clerks and peons. It is not fair to deal with the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee in that way. From the accounts given by the Government as well as by the auditing staff there is a clear case for closing down

[Mr. D. Narayana Raju]

[11th March 1929]

this Leather Trade Institute. Therefore I request that this Council will accept the recommendations of the Accountant-General and not the recommendations contained in the report of the Public Accounts Committee."

* Mr. J. A. SALDANHA :—" Sir, I beg to second this amendment of the hon. Member. I do not desire to repeat the arguments which he has urged in support of the motion. But I would only add certain remarks as to the other points on which, I think, we should require further elucidation and some explanation.

" Last year this House had the services of the hon. the Law Member who began the attack on this Public Accounts Committee. It was a vehement attack especially in connexion with the Forest administration. Now he holds the Forest portfolio and I am afraid he now finds everything best in the best of worlds. However, the hon. Member has promised a comprehensive enquiry into the policy of that department. I hope he will approach the question from the point of view with which he had approached it when he attacked the forest policy of the Government from this side of the House.

" One of our puzzles is that this report deals with the year 1926-27. When I received it I thought it was handed to me by mistake and I wanted to return it saying that it was an old one and that there ought to be one for 1927-28. I do not know whether the hon. Members have noticed it. Most of them I think when they received the report would have consigned it to the waste paper basket. What is the use of giving us a report for 1926-27 two years after, that is, in the month of March 1929, dealing with the affairs two years previous to the present year. We are also told that the misdeeds of those years cannot be undone in this year 1929. Some of the officers who were responsible for several irregularities have already retired and Government think it impossible to do anything. They no doubt get their pension but the Government will have nothing to do with it. It is not possible to get even their explanation. So things are going on merrily in this way. We the non-official Members can assure the Government that we always find time to read these reports and would request the Government to furnish us with the report for the year 1927-28 so that we may take a keen interest in the affairs of the year and see that things are mended as quickly as possible.

" Now turning to the report itself, I am at a loss to see on page 25 where reference is made to a project which is as follows :—

' The Accountant-General has pointed out that an estimate for an irrigation project to cost Rs. 3.2 lakhs was sanctioned by Government in February 1924, that in December 1926, a revised estimate involving an excess of .28 lakh with a corresponding diminution in the anticipated return was submitted by the Chief Engineer (Irrigation) and that thereupon the Government in February 1927 ordered the project to be abandoned. The works expenditure already incurred amounts to .52 lakh of which .83 lakh represents unprofitable outlay.'

" I do not know to which project this refers. It is well I think to have more indications of the project. As it is the report is difficult to go through. We have got cross references and other references which may be clear to an expert but we are lay men and as such are unable to understand what it contains. I request the Government to make it a little more intelligible.

" The Accountant-General's report is not here. I think that it would be well if the Government will take us into their confidence and place before

11th March 1929]

[Mr. J. A. Saldanha]

us the whole report of the Accountant-General and I am sure it will not be adding to their troubles if a more intelligible review is placed before the House."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"Am I to understand that the Members of the Council were not supplied with Appropriation Reports of the Accountant-General?" 4-30 p. m.

* Mr. J. A. SALDANHA :—"Sir, I am sorry for the remarks I made. We were supplied with the report of the Accountant-General, but that was some time ago. I threw it aside when I found that it was about the year 1926-27, an old story. Sir, in the report reference has been made to the constitution of the new Mettur district. I may refer to the remarks of the Finance Department with which this Committee agrees. I think in this respect this House ought to be taken into more confidence in the matter of details. Only crores and crores of items of expenditure on machinery, etc., are given and no details."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"In seconding the motion of Mr. D. Narayana Raju I do not think the hon. Member will be in order in referring to machinery, etc."

* Mr. J. A. SALDANHA :—"Sir, in seconding his motion I am making certain remarks in general. I think it has been the practice here to make general remarks in considering the report as a whole."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"This is the first time that an amendment to the report has been moved."

* Mr. J. A. SALDANHA :—"May I not offer a few remarks on the report in general?"

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"I think it is better to dispose of the amendment."

"Is it the wish of the House to discuss the amendment as well as the report together? If the amendment alone is to be discussed hon. Members will have to confine their remarks to the items mentioned in the amendment. But if they want to discuss the report as well as the amendment together, then all the paragraphs of the report will be before the House for discussion. I want to consult the wishes of the House."

* Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—"I think it is better to take them together."

* The hon. Sir NORMAN MARJORIBANKS :—"Sir, so far as the Government are concerned, if it suits the convenience of the House to discuss the amendment as well as the report together, we have no objection."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"The amendment as well as the report is for the consideration of the House. Mr. J. A. Saldanha will continue his speech."

* Mr. J. A. SALDANHA :—"Sir, regarding the details of the Mettur Project, I wish to say that there are several Members who would be glad to have a comprehensive survey of all items of expenditure connected with it. Sir, there are five engineers working within a compass of one square mile. We are at a loss to know what work each is doing."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"Is it a matter referred to by the Accountant-General in the report?"

[11th March 1929]

* Mr. J. A. SALDANHA :—"Sir, I am referring to the remarks of the Finance Department."

* The hon. Mr. T. E. MOIR :—"May I ask where, Sir?"

* Mr. J. A. SALDANHA :—"At page 36."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"I realize that the House may be very anxious to go through the various remarks in the Public Accounts Committee's report. If any matter has been dealt with by the Committee, hon. Members may refer to it, but they are not at liberty to deal with matters not dealt with by it nor considered by the Accountant-General, nor with matters which the Finance Department did not bring to the notice of the House. I do not think hon. Members will be justified in now reviewing the whole administration. If any particular paragraph in the report refers to the matter referred to by Mr. Saldanha he will be in order."

* Mr. J. A. SALDANHA :—"I shall read the exact words :

We have been furnished with a note prepared by the Finance Department in which it is pointed out :—

'(b) The execution of the project has been approved by the Legislative Council both by its acceptance of a resolution moved by the Government and by voting the funds required for its execution from year to year. The legislature, having accepted the project, should be deemed to have authorized the executive Government to take such measures as are necessary for its proper execution. Deviations from the original scope or plan of the project are matters of detail to be settled by the executive. The constitution of the project headworks area into a district which was considered necessary for the proper execution of the project is therefore, part of the Cauvery-Metter Project which is a sanctioned service.'

"I take objection to the remarks of the Finance Department which are quoted with approval below :

'We consider that the attitude of Government is reasonable, as full detailed reports of the expenditure relating to the project are regularly placed before the Legislative Council.'

"I say, no detailed reports are placed before the Council ; at any rate no sufficient details are shown to enable us to know exactly what is going on there. Unless all of us are taken there, I do not know whether we shall be able to know the details.

"I am glad that details are furnished in the Finance Memorandum which gives us some idea of the working of the project, etc. But to one who has not got a more comprehensive and detailed report, it will be unintelligible. It will be a revelation to hon. Members to be told that there are 5 different departments working with 5 different executive engineers within an area of one square mile. What are they doing in different departments? These are all things which are a secret to this House. Although we are sitting at a short distance from Mettur, the Government have no inclination to take us there or to appoint a standing committee to watch the whole thing. Why on earth should we not be taken into more confidence in regard to the details of this costly scheme? The complacent view taken by the Public Accounts Committee is one with which this House cannot agree easily. I therefore urge that the Government should place before the Public Accounts Committee, before the Finance Committee and before this

11th March 1929]

[Mr. J. A. Saldanha]

House much more detailed information with regard to this project. I do not think I have got many more remarks to make."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—"Sir, I should like to associate myself with the hon. the Finance Member with the expression of our obligation to the members of the Public Accounts Committee. I should like to add, however, to those to whom our gratitude is due, the Accountant-General. There is a refreshing candour and desire to criticise where criticism is due in his report which we find lacking usually in Government reports. The Accountant-General is the only officer from whom we expect criticisms on acknowledged defects of the Government. This Public Accounts Committee is about the only statutory committee of this House and is intended, in the words of the distinguished parliamentary writer May, 'to secure an effectual examination of the accounts of the Province'. It seems to me that an earlier and a more detailed consideration of this report is required before we can bring to bear upon the spending departments the vigilant control of this House. I am sure the Finance Department is doing its best, but at the same time, I think it will strengthen the hands of the Finance Department if the spending departments know that the eyes of the Legislative Council are wide open and that they are not going to tolerate laxity either in budgeting or in expenditure.

"The first point to which I should like to make reference is that in Parliament the forms of the estimates as they are presented cannot be changed except with the consent of the Public Accounts Committee. This is a matter which has been recently engaging your attention, Mr. President, to a certain extent, the form in which the estimates ought to be presented. Under the existing Acts and rules, the whole thing is vested in the Finance Member as to the form in which the estimates ought to be presented. I do suggest that it will be better if that power is controlled by this House through the Public Accounts Committee, as to the form in which the estimates ought to be presented. That will affect to a very large extent the nature and the extent of the financial control exercised by this House over the whole expenditure of this Province.

"The next thing to which I would like to invite the attention of the House and of the Government, if I may, is that referred to at page 4 of the Public Accounts Committee's report, that is, the chronic disease of this Government of over-budgeting. With regard to expenditure, against the total grant aggregating to Rs. 1,535.26 lakhs, the actual expenditure amounted to Rs. 1,364.74 lakhs—a saving of Rs. 170.52 lakhs or 11 per cent. This certainly is remarkable and shows that the spending departments budget without any reference to actualities and the savings which have occurred under some of the departments are of immense significance—

	LAKHS.		LAKHS.
Under Irrigation ...	65.49	Under Public Health ...	10.25
„ Education ...	5.72	„ Civil Works ...	24.13
„ Medical ...	3.33		

"These show that in the case of departments whose activities have a direct relation to the well being of the people as a whole, there has been an under-expenditure which to me seems to be wholly unjustified, if there was any kind of business instinct in the framing of the demands of these departments at the time of budgeting.

[Mr. S. Satyamurti]

[11th March 1929]

"Sir, a little more light is thrown upon this matter at pages 69-70 of the book, that is the Auditor-General's comments on the appropriation accounts for 1926-27. He says: 'I fully endorse what the Accountant-General has written in this paragraph. However efficient control over expenditure may be, it cannot entirely neutralize the effects of an over-liberal budget estimate.' Then he goes on to recommend a system of lump cuts against which I am afraid this Government and the Finance Department have been protesting unreasonably. The Government of India also have passed orders in this matter. 'I hope', the Auditor-General says, 'that the Public Accounts Committee will endorse my view that the adoption by the Local Government of a procedure akin to that of the Government of India will improve the budgeting in the province'. . . 'The Governor-General in Council notes with interest that the system of lump cuts introduced in the civil estimates during the year 1925-26 has been justified by results'. . . He agrees with the Committee that wherever possible, the necessary reduction in the estimates should be made under the various detailed heads. It must once more be impressed upon all officers and departments concerned that a careful calculation of requirements in respect of such expenditure is imperative so that, as pointed out by the Committee, the estimates under other heads such as interest and establishments may not be widely disturbed.

4-45
P.M.

"That is a matter to which I know the attention of the Government is just now being drawn but at the same time I wish the Government accept, unless they are willing to offer some other remedy, the suggestion of the Accountant-General and the Government of India of introducing lump cuts in the budget estimates. In order to show how important this matter is I should like to draw the attention of this hon. House to the remarks of the Accountant-General at page 28 of this red book in which he says: 'After a close study of the figures for 1926-27 the Accountant-General is left with the impression that proper constitutional control is largely frustrated by the inaccuracy of the original estimates.' He refers to 'conspicuous over-estimation'. He refers to lump cuts and says 'The Government would decide the amount of the cut on the basis of the past proved capabilities of each department'. I think the hon. the Finance Member in his speech had some pointed remarks to make on the tendency of spending departments to budget for more sums than they can usefully or effectively spend in the course of the year. I wish that more scrutiny were exercised and better results achieved. I am simply stressing the utter futility of the Finance Committee sanctioning all the estimates that come up before them, which might result in starving the activities of other departments or might enable a department to reappropriate more sums continuously for which if proposals of expenditure had been received from other departments they would have normally been sanctioned by the Committee. This is what the Accountant-General says: 'They would give the concerned officers complete authority to spend in accordance with the details of his initial demand only requiring him to give timely warning if he did in fact seem likely to exceed the reduced grant'. Then he refers to the usual practice of these officers. He is using the word 'fluctuation'. This is what he says: 'Scattered over the budget are items described by controlling officers as fluctuating and when they have said this these officers seem to feel that departures from estimates

11th March 1929]

[Mr. S. Satyamurti]

are sufficiently explained. This might indeed be so if at the same time it were not the fact that such items almost invariably show savings. The practice appears to be to budget for such fluctuating items on such a maximum figure as will obviate the necessity for a supplementary appropriation. If this is the prevailing principle it is subversive of constitutional control. The estimate should be what is truly expected to be required even though its only basis may often be an intelligent interpretation of the figures of the past, with perhaps the most approximate forecast of conditions during the next eighteen months or so. The term 'fluctuating' is, at least, as sufficient an explanation of an excess (in due course provided for) as of a saving.

• "I desire to draw the attention of the House to a few individual items to which, at the beginning, he has referred. In connexion with those items I wish the Government had been a little stronger than it has been.

"Thus in regard to certificates given by officers at page 17 of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee it is found 'Government will themselves take and look to the heads of departments likewise to take, a very serious view of all cases in which an officer is found to have signed an incorrect certificate'. I have found, Mr. President, that when an officer is to be given a punitive sentence, the order of the Government always refers to the future. I have never seen a single instance in which a single officer has been punished. They are not even told something to the effect that they are to make improvement or to be more careful in future. It is something like suspending a cane and just hanging it over his head saying that he will be punished but never punishing him for the mistake he has committed.

"I am much obliged to my hon. Friend the Revenue Member for pointing out to me the case of a Deputy Collector in which the gentleman concerned has been reverted to his permanent post. However I wish that the responsibility for such mistakes is traced a little higher. I believe the certificate was passed by the various superior officers. Although I am thankful to the Government for this punishment, I wish that a severer punishment had been given to these officers, which I am sure would make them more careful in matters in which higher officers are also involved.

"There is one item, which example is, I am afraid, being copied by local bodies, viz., withdrawal of moneys in advance of requirements. The Committee says on page 18 'we understand that these remarks are being borne in mind by departments of Government in dealing with individual cases'. Further you will find 'the officer in the Agricultural department referred to in paragraph 9 (a) on page 138 of the Accountant-General's report was censured by Government. We wish to record the view that similar conduct should in future receive more severe punishment than a mere censure'. Here I am fully justified in remarking that it is a case again of postponing punishments to the future. I wish that Government were a little stronger than they have been in the past. Last year's budget showed that the local bodies and the Corporation of Madras were equally to be blamed for drawing more money than they could spend. They borrow money and pay interest on the money but the money is not spent, and allowed to lie over idle. This is a matter which requires very careful scrutiny by the Government.

[Mr. S. Satyamurti]

[11th March 1929]

"Then there is the joke of the Forest Department which is running more or less always at a loss. That is a very peculiar case which seems to me to show that there is something rotten in the way in which these items are dealt with. This is what the report says: 'the Accountant-General has remarked that the book value of a water-supply line relating to a commercial forest undertaking was given at Rs. 14,550 in the balance sheet of the concern for the years ending 31st March 1922 and 31st March 1923 that a report of the Forest Engineer showed the actual expenditure on the work to be Rs. 11,067 and that the asset revalued on 31st March 1925 at Rs. 1,470' and then the conclusion of the Government is 'the attention of the Chief Conservator should be drawn to the inaccuracy of his original revaluation and that greater care should be taken by him in future'.

"Again comes the case of postponing punishments to the future.

"Then we go to the Irrigation Department. In 1926-27 the Council voted 206 lakhs of rupees and only 141 lakhs was spent. As regards this matter the Committee says: 'We consider that there was a grave mis-calculation as to the date by which construction on sanctioned estimates could be commenced'.

"My hon. Friend Mr. Narayan Raju has referred to the refusal of the Government to accept the recommendations of the Accountant-General that these Judicial officers should not be classed as non-vacation officers. He has dealt with it fully and I believe the Government ought to treat them as the Accountant-General has recommended them to be treated as Vacation department officers.

"Under Public Health, a number of *new schemes* have been introduced; but the Public Accounts Committee has come to the conclusion that 'the utilization of savings on new schemes should receive the sanction of the Legislative Council'. It is a very important matter and I do not know what the Government are going to do. Whether it is a case of using the savings from grants or asking for extra demands it is very important that when important new schemes are contemplated, they should obtain the previous sanction of the Legislative Council.

"Reference has also been made to the Leather Trades Institute, to the way in which that institute is being kept up. I do not believe that the continuance of that institute can be justified on any grounds at all. The loss has been very great and there is no chance of its working on any financial basis. I do not see why it should be kept on. The only thing that Government say is 'It is expected that a decision on these points will be arrived at at an early date'. That means years.

"Then there is this point about the special pay of Rs. 100 to the Principal, Lady Willingdon Training College. The Committee says: 'The Accountant-General was informed that the approval of the Secretary of State would be obtained to the grant of special pay'. I do not see why this expenditure should have been incurred without proper consent. There was no urgency about it.

"As regards the constitution of the new Mettur district I submit that the Government's attitude is wholly unreasonable. Of that the Committee says: 'The attitude of the Government seems to be reasonable'. It seems to me that whenever there are large schemes such as the formation of a district and so on, they have to come to the Council for sanction.

11th March 1929]

[Mr. S. Satyamurti]

"Then I want to refer to a few details, very briefly to show how there are still many figures in the matter of expenditure to which the attention of this House should be drawn. The Accountant-General has observed that the budget estimates under almost all items were less accurate than in 1925-26. The Government give their explanation but I think their explanation is not satisfactory, and they should see that this sort of practice should not be allowed to go on any further.

"As regards the Police Department the Committee has made certain recommendations. I do not know whether those recommendations have been taken into consideration by the Government. This is what the Committee has recommended:—'the possibilities of recruitment could be more carefully estimated'. I do not know if this has been done. If it has not been done, it should be done.

"Sir, with regard to the Agricultural Department at page 59 this is what the Committee says:—'The Committee observes that the audit irregularities noticed in the Agricultural Department indicated the ignorance of the accounts and the rules and procedure on the part of officers and asked Government to consider the desirability of prescribing Accounts test for all officers of the department'. Do you know what the Government have done? This is what they say:—'The Accounts test has since been prescribed for the subordinates of the Agricultural Department also and orders have been issued directing that the Accounts test or some other simple test in accounts should be prescribed for officers and subordinates in all departments'. It seems to me that we must have only one test which can be recognized. Some other test may mean any test or no test.

"There is only one other matter I should like to refer. At page 64 of the report the Committee says:—'The attention of the Commissioner of Labour should be drawn to the fact that the supplementary grant for the construction of wells, pathways, etc., for the depressed classes in 1925-26 was unnecessary'. May I know how this supplementary demand was passed and by which Finance Committee? And what was the Finance Department doing?

"These are only examples to show how lax financial control has been over the various departments of Government. I want to reinforce my point by referring to the observation of the Committee at page 65 which says thus:—'Breaches of the well-known rule that money should not be drawn in advance of requirements are far too frequent and very severe notice should be taken of them when they occur'.

"As regards the position of the Finance Committee, Government state it is merely an advisory committee. As to whether the Finance Committee should not have some kind of preliminary control over original or supplementary demands before they are placed before the Legislative Council, at least over voted items, is a matter which will have to be examined by you some time or other. As to whether under the exception provided by law under section 72-D of the Government of India Act travelling allowances and some other items relating to officers should be treated as a non-voted item because the pay of those officers is non-voted as a service provided by law or whether they should be subject to the vote of the House—just as other items in other cases are subject to the vote of the House—is a matter which requires your careful scrutiny."

[11th March 1929]

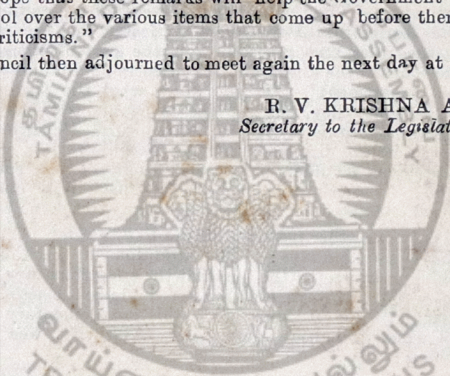
* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"The hon. Member cannot address the Chair on that subject at this stage. He has to take a more suitable opportunity."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI:—"I am merely mentioning how the Government are encroaching upon the powers of this House by suggesting that voted items should become non-voted. I say that even in regard to other non-voted items just as these incidental charges are subject to the vote of the House, these items also should be so subject. There is no provision of law or Standing Order under which they can treat these items as non-voted and they will have to come before us only as demands.

"I have merely referred to some salient items in the report but it seems to me that this post-mortem examination of the Government will serve no useful purpose, unless the Government take vigorous and prompt action. It is in the hope that these remarks will help the Government to exercise a stricter control over the various items that come up before them that I have made these criticisms."

The Council then adjourned to meet again the next day at 11 a.m.

R. V. KRISHNA AYYAR,
Secretary to the Legislative Council.



வாய்மையே வெல்லும்
TRUTH ALONE TRIUMPHS